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PANAMA: Government apparently to publicize its
dissatisfaction with progress of canal talks.
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[REDACTED]

PANAMA: The government will soon issue a public statement that will probably stress its dissatisfaction with the progress to date on canal negotiations.

The Panamanian foreign minister informed the US ambassador that the statement is not intended to disrupt the negotiations. Nevertheless, he has reportedly stated that Panama's demand for return of all land in the Zone not being used for canal operations, and for an end to all military activities not directly related to canal defense are major sticking points. Panama also wants a very rapid phase-out of US jurisdiction over the Zone. It demands, for example, that the Zone's police and postal system be integrated with that of Panama within a year. Panama is insisting, moreover, that any new treaty be for no more than 30 years and that the canal must then be given to Panama.

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[REDACTED]

In the past Torrijos has been loath to allow the Panamanian negotiators much flexibility and apparently has even been concerned that they were too conciliatory. The proposed changes appear to confirm Torrijos' intention to continue his hard-line policy and may reflect in part his desire to play an even more active role in the negotiations.

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